

2022-02-08

"Freedom Convoy 2022" – Ottawa, Ontario

O Div. Deployment Guide

Situation

A mix of approximately 500 personal and commercial motor vehicles continue to disrupt downtown Ottawa as part of the ongoing Freedom Convoy 2022 protest. Media reports indicate that Ottawa Police estimated 8,000 to 15,000 people were in attendance during the peak of the protest. Numbers of individuals arriving and departing the NCR remain fluid and will likely fluctuate daily as the demonstration continues, with an influx of protesters expected on weekends.¹ A number of local residents have also begun to organize and both planned and unplanned counter-protests have taken place. Resources from the Ottawa Police Service, the RCMP, the OPP and several municipal policing partners have been deployed to Ottawa to maintain public order.

Posture

The RCMP's posture in response to this major event has been steadily increasing over the last few weeks, and O Division has scaled up its resource commitment accordingly. At the moment, duties are divided into two core responsibilities:

1) *Protective Operations Support*

The RCMP has been providing a security presence at various sites throughout the NCR. The members' roles and responsibilities at these locations include, but are not limited to: physical security, access control, perimeter security, and vehicle and foot patrols. These sites are:

- Rideau Hall
- Harrington Lake (PM's cottage) (small number of members)
- Portage Bridge at Laurier Ave. (Qc side)

Deployed members have also been used to augment **Protective Operations Response Unit (PRU)** numbers. The PRU's mandate is to patrol and respond to incidents in areas which fall under the RCMP's purview, such as protected clients and properties, diplomatic missions and federal roadways.

A number of uniformed members are required to remain available to respond should a sudden need for additional resources at any of the sites arise. These "surge" members are asked to remain at the command centre and be available for quick response, immediate deployment for things such as replacements and for duty reassignments, but also to assist with general tasks such as delivering supplies and meals to posted members.

- The target number of "surge" members required will fluctuate based on availability.

2) *Ottawa Police Service Support (majority of members)*

¹ IMCIT STA 2022-07 – 2022-02-03 – SPECIAL THREAT ADVISORY – UPDATE 5, FREEDOM CONVOY 2022: ONGOING IN OTTAWA SINCE JANUARY 28/29, 2022

With the increased strain placed on OPS resources, the RCMP has made a commitment to augment the municipal and provincial police presence already deployed in and around the Ottawa Freedom Convoy “red zone”. The RCMP’s role is to maintain public order and deter & detect criminal activity. While the RCMP is not the police of jurisdiction, members can nevertheless expect to be sworn in as Special Constables for the Province of Ontario. Roles and responsibilities of OPS Support members include, but are not limited to: physical security at soft and hard checkpoints, access control, vehicle and foot patrols, and enforcement of the criminal code.

As of 2022-02-08, there were 9 intersections being covered by RCMP members in this capacity. Two to four member teams are paired up in marked units at various locations throughout the downtown core. Additionally, they are overseen by three roving units whose purpose it is to provide backup, relief, communications support and deliver meals to static units.

Members assigned to these duties should have a solid operational background (recent general duty policing experience is an asset).

Accommodations

O Div. members are currently staying at the Hamptons Inn located at 100 Coventry Rd. in Ottawa. This hotel is located directly across the street from the former NHQ (1200 Vanier Pkwy) and in near proximity to National Div. HQ (~2 min drive). Logistically speaking, this has been beneficial as members can park fleet vehicles (both marked and unmarked) at a secure location and have a short drive to report to their assignment.

There are some protesters residing at the same hotel however, as they check out, the hotel is no longer renting to anyone other than police officers. The majority of rooms at the hotel are occupied by the RCMP. Further, this location is directly adjacent to a large parking lot where protesters have congregated and built an encampment that doubles as a staging area for the downtown protest. (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-coventry-stadium-fuel-camp-police-1.6342023>)

There are no safes in the rooms and members are to bring their lockboxes for storing their firearms when not on duty.

Shifts & Schedule

O Div. members are currently covering the overnight shift while C Div.’s have been assigned the day shift.

O Div. members should expect:

- To work continuously without RTOs for the duration of their deployment.
- To work shifts in excess of 12 hours.
- To maintain their home schedule but adjust their start time.
- To work overnights for the duration of their deployment.
- To work outdoors for extended periods of time.

Protective Operations Support members’ schedule is 0600-1800 and 1800-0600. OPS Support members’ schedule is 0700-1900 and 1900-0700. However, an hour has been added at the end of most shifts to

allow for a seamless transition, making the shifts 0600-1900 and 1800-0700 for Protective and 0700-2000 and 1900-0800 for OPS Support.

Team Composition

O Div. members will be assigned duties through consultation with our existing NCOs on the ground and the incoming NCO i/cs for your deployment group. This will allow for placements based upon experience, skills, etc. and to establish a reporting structure within our own group.

Communications

National Div. portable radios are dispensed to individual members at the beginning of each shift and must be returned to the command centre before members go off duty. This closed network allows RCMP members to communicate with each other, their TL, Senior NCOs, the command centre and OCC. Roving units and TLs are also issued OPS portables which enables them to relay communications in both directions to and from OPS members and dispatch in real time. The O Div. radio system is not utilized during this deployment and members need not bring their issued O Div. portable.

Vehicles and Equipment

A number of marked vehicles have been made available by National Div. but efforts should be made to travel using O Div. marked or subdued units. The projected increase in the RCMP's resource allocation to this major event may put additional pressures on National Div. fleet services so if at all possible, O Div. members should utilize their unit's marked vehicles or fully equipped subdued/unmarked units.

Similarly, trained members should travel with their home unit's CEWs (if possible). National Div. has a limited inventory and has not made these available to deployed members on a consistent basis.

Members should also travel with their pistol lock box in case their hotel accommodations do not offer an in-room safe.

Meals

Mid-shift meals have been supplied to members and for the most part have been well received. The command centre and some of the "down rooms" across the downtown core also have an assortment of food and beverages available to members. As per policy, National Div. has confirmed that if for any reason a meal has not been provided, or it needs to be supplemented, members may claim out-of-pocket expenses up to the applicable meal allowance.

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